

THE  
ADDRESS IN MEDICINE,  
DELIVERED AT  
THE ANNUAL MEETING  
OF THE  
BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

*AT SHEFFIELD.*

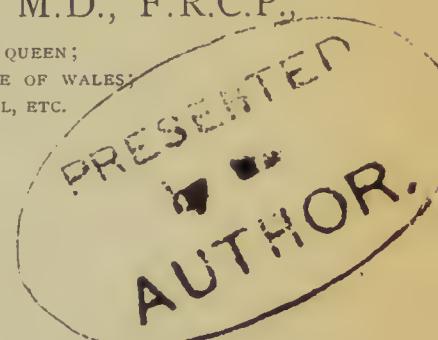
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## THE ADDRESS IN MEDICINE.

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A CERTAIN noble lady was asked by her daughter-in-law for advice, as to the best method to be pursued in educating her children. The reply recommended "a little wholesome neglect". This apparently paradoxical suggestion was not intended to imply that her ladyship undervalued systematic training and education, but that she trusted much to the natural tendencies of growth and development, to bring out the latent forces, provided they were guided by superior knowledge and intellect into their proper channels. The answer was a protest against pedantry, and the procrustean bed of the pedagogue, which in former times, as now, too commonly seeks to establish an uniformity of level and appearance, regardless of the impulses of nature.

A trim garden in the Louis Quatorze style causes us to admire the ingenuity of the gardener, who, by his shears, would compel the bushes and trees to assume any fantastic shapes that his fancy led him to determine upon; but the lover of nature finds in such productions no food for the imagination or for the cravings of the heart, for he feels that the same labour and time bestowed upon developing the glories and harmonies of colour, form, and perspective, would have better served to raise him from the mean and grovelling, to that which is exalted and eternal.

That which excites the admiration of foreigners in our country and constitution, and runs counter to so many preconceived notions of the fitness of things, imbibed by men who have been educated under a different *régime*, lies really in "the little wholesome neglect" that the Briton has enjoyed ever since he has acquired an historical name. He has been allowed to grow; or rather, in spite of frequent attempts to curb and stunt him, he has learned to know his strength and to assert his independence. It is not appropriate that I should, in this place, dwell upon any question of the political development of our country; but the preceding remarks suggest themselves forcibly to any one who, on an occasion like the present, casts his eye back upon the features that mark the growth and expansion of the body, an integral part of the commonwealth, to which we, the medical men of Great Britain, belong.

As a profession, we have enjoyed but little of the fostering care of Parliaments, of Corporations, of Universities. What they have done for us has rarely been owing to their spontaneous action, but has been mainly due to that *vis à tergo* which Lord Palmerston, in a different sphere, demanded when any great measure of public utility was urged upon him. Our efforts and success will be none the less, if we occasionally, while taking breath in our race, look back to examine our

previous course; to know the sloughs in which we have floundered; the pitfalls we have escaped; to obtain a clear view of the goal that shines before us, in an ever brightening and broadening light.

A great future lies before us. No utopian vision of fantastic delights, no weird dream of golden joys and boundless felicity; but a prospect that forces upon us the conviction that we are entering upon a field of wider duties, of greater service to our fellow-man, of a nearer approach to the fulfilment of our highest destiny, as members of a Christian commonwealth.

Many who are now honouring me with their attention may think that so much remains to be done by the profession, that they may be disposed to regard lightly the labours and achievements of the past. But those whose memory, like my own, can bring before them the events of the last forty years, and who can realise to themselves the state of the medical profession in our island at the earlier part of the present century, will form a different estimate. Most of the labourers who have brought about, what I cannot but call, our present hopeful condition, have passed away. But it is right and fitting, and in accordance with the spirit in which these addresses were originally established, that our gratitude, while it is not unmindful of what we owe to our contemporaries, should follow those who have gone before with loving hearts.

At the commencement of the nineteenth century, the medical profession was still in a chaotic state in Great Britain and Ireland. Its detractors denied that it occupied a scientific status; and in spite of the eminence of some of the heroes of our calling, we could scarcely ignore the trade-mark which was conspicuous on its documents. In vain have I sought for any evidence of corporate professional feeling in the earlier history of British medicine. Great names—aye, and greater than Italy, Germany, or France can boast of—illumine our roll of distinguished citizens; but how many of them had to lay the foundation of their medical knowledge in foreign schools, because the means were wanting at home, to acquire the alphabet of their profession?

Linacre, the founder of the Royal College of Physicians, studied at Bologna and Padua, where he took his degree of Doctor of Medicine; Caius studied physic under Montanus, and dissected with Vesalius, at Padua, where he graduated; Harvey, to whom the whole world bows in reverent admiration, learned his profession under Fabricius ab Aquapendente, Minadous, and Casserius, and took his degree at the same university. Leyden, Heidelberg, Avignon, Paris, Montpelier, are some of the many foreign universities, which, as we learn from Dr. Monk's erudite *Roll of the College of Physicians*, claim as their alumni most of the eminent medical men belonging to the sixteenth, seventeenth, and even far into the eighteenth centuries. These men did not, as is well and wisely done by physicians and surgeons of the present day, go abroad to compare foreign with home experiences, and to perfect a professional education of which the foundation had been laid in their own schools and universities, but they undertook the risk and fatigue of travel, which in their days was no slight matter, to acquire knowledge which was unattainable in their own country.

I have in vain sought for early evidences of medical teaching in England, or especially in the English universities, before the beginning of the sixteenth century. Nicolas of Farnham, and John of Gaddesden, who treated Edward III, when he had the small-pox, by wrapping him up in a scarlet cloth, and discovered the method of distilling fresh from salt water, appear to have been the first exceptions to the rule

that our princes brought over their medical attendants from abroad. Nicolas de Farnham (as we are told by Matthew of Paris),\* who was elected in 1241 to the see of Durham, had been rector in arts at Paris, and afterwards practised medicine at Bologna. He became pre-eminently distinguished in, and obtained great favour by, his skill. The king and queen, Henry III and his consort, by the advice of some learned men, and expressly at the instance of Otto, the legate, the Bishop of Carlisle, and some other of the king's secret advisers, summoned Nicolas to take charge of their souls and bodies, and to be their familiar counsellor ; in which office he conducted himself well and prudently till he was elected to the said episcopal dignity.

The first medical lectures of which I can find any record were delivered in Oxford by a foreigner of the name of Andrew Alazard,† who had graduated at Montpelier, and was appointed by the chancellor and proctors to lecture on medicine, and to explain, from tables of his own, *Avicenna de Pulsibus*.

So little, however, was the science of medicine appreciated in Oxford during the sixteenth century, that the university admitted, about 1550, Simon Ludford, originally a Franciscan Friar, and subsequently an apothecary in London ; and afterwards David Langston, a coppersmith, two ignorant, unlettered, and incompetent persons, to the honours of a baccalaureate in medicine. The visitors of the university, on being applied to by the College of Physicians (*Caio Präsidente*), interdicted the university from a repetition of their license, and provided that a certain course of study should be followed by each candidate previously to his incorporation.‡ The utter neglect of medicine by the highest educational bodies in the realm was not redeemed by any supplementary efforts on the part of others. The barber-surgeons, who were incorporated by letters patent from Edward IV, in 1461,§ and whose functions were of the most limited nature, were the only representatives of the general practitioner of the present day, until the corporation of barber-surgeons was dissolved in the 18th of George II. At this date, the surgeons, who seceded from the barbers, were incorporated, but they were not endowed with a charter till the beginning of the present century. The apothecaries, as a mere trading company, were founded, in 1606, by James I, but they exercised no influence on the profession of medicine till Parliament, in 1815, conferred upon them powers which they have since wisely exercised and developed.

Valuable as have been the services of the College of Physicians in giving a local habitation and a name to medicine, and in holding a royal ægis over many great men of science, neither this corporation, nor the barber-surgeons, nor, at a later period, the College of Surgeons, could be regarded as representing or acting with the body of medical practitioners, or as aiding the social or scientific status of the great body of the sons of Æsculapius in England, whose numbers were gradually swelling into many legions. The College of Physicians—may a devoted son be permitted to say as much without an approach to disrespect—failed to recognise the grand opportunity offered to them in the early part of the present century, of taking the entire management and discipline of the medical profession into their own hands, and the consequence was, that a City company bravely came to the rescue. All

\* Bohn's edition, vol. i, p. 231.

† See Ant. & Wood, *Hist. and Antiq. Oxon.*, vol. i, p. 239.

‡ Dr. Monk's *Roll of the College of Physicians*, vol. i, p. 59.

§ Maitland's *History of London*, 1775.

honour to the Hall in Blackfriars! The master and wardens of the Apothecaries' Company rose to the dignity of the occasion; and what they have done, since 1815, for the promotion of the best interests of the medical profession, deserves not only a bare allusion, but our most cordial acknowledgments.

But jealousies and bickerings continued, and the different branches of a great profession could not even now claim any of the various institutions existing throughout the country as representing their first interests. The clouds surrounded us more and more, and appeared increasingly gloomy, when an acute observer might observe a silver streak in the west, heralding the dawn of a brighter era. The dawn of a new life was seen over Worcester—a life which we are beginning to realise in all its capacities, and of which meetings like the present are the partial fulfilment of early promise.

Among the many events which, in the recent development of our profession, appear to me to be most characteristic, both from their mode of origin and the significance of their bearing upon the spirit of the times, as upon the future of our corporate and scientific growth, there are especially three, to which I would crave your present attention, in order that, on the one hand, we may recognise the deep obligations which we owe to our predecessors; that, on the other, we may seek to derive from past experience the lessons that should guide us and our successors in our future career. The three events to which my introductory remarks may have already turned your thoughts have especial reference to what appear to me the chief phases of our advancement as the followers of a beneficent and learned calling, viz., our relations to each other and the State; our relations to the science of medicine; and our relations to education.

The *first event* was inaugurated on the 17th of July, 1832, when Dr. Hastings induced fifty gentlemen of the medical profession to assemble, under the presidency of Dr. Johnstone of Birmingham, in the board-room of the Worcester Infirmary. On that occasion, Dr. Hastings delivered an address which was pregnant with all the great consequences to which the Provincial Medical and Surgical Association has since led. Allow me to recall his own words, as published afterwards in the first volume of the *Transactions* of the Association, which appeared in 1833. "I congratulate you, gentlemen", he said, "that the day for forming a Provincial Medical and Surgical Association has at length arrived—an association which, I trust, is destined to exercise no inconsiderable influence on the future of medical science. Feeling, as I have done, the disadvantages under which the prosecutors of medicine resident in English provincial towns have laboured, in consequence of the want of any system of co-operation, by which their separate exertions for the promotion of our knowledge of the healing art may be so united as to render them more influential and more extensively useful, I cannot but hail the day—*hunc latum medicis diem*—as one of peculiar promise, as one likely to lead to the most important results."

You, gentlemen, know as well, and better than I do, how far these prognostications have been realised. Three hundred members at once rallied round Dr. Hastings; and the best proof that he had only become the happy expositor of a wide-spread feeling of the necessity of harmonious co-operation for great common ends, has been afforded by the progressive adhesion of medical men from all parts of the country to the programme he laid down. Very valuable contributions to literature (medical, surgical, hygienic, biographical) appeared, first in the

*Transactions*, and subsequently, in 1840, in the *Provincial Medical and Surgical Journal*, edited for the Association by Drs. Hennis Green and Streeter. In the meantime, the interest in the Association had spread to the metropolis, and the particularism, to use a favourite continental term, which very properly belonged to the Association at its outset, was abandoned; the jealousy between the provinces and London yielded to the imperative feeling of brotherhood which unites us all; and, in 1853, according to a resolution adopted at the meeting held in Oxford in the previous July, the *Provincial Medical and Surgical Journal* appeared, under the editorship of Dr. (now Sir John) Cormack, as the *Association Medical Journal*. This was now placed in the hands of the subscribers every week, instead of, as previously, once a fortnight. The change was effected, not without some opposition on the part of those who, fearing too radical changes, doubted the soundness of the Oxford decision; but, as the editor observes in his opening remarks to the new series, it was "a strong declaration of the necessity which the progress of events has imposed on the Association of pursuing that line of duty which had hitherto been acted upon with that augmented vigour which a wider sphere of action required—a vigour which could only be effectively developed by greater frequency of publication, and by the possession of a literary and scientific centre in London, where editorial resources are more abundant, more varied, and more easily available than in any other city in the world".

From that time, the arterial pulses that beat throughout the kingdom, acted synchronously and rhythmically with the heart; a sympathetic centre had been found, which tranquillised or warded off local disturbances in the circulation; and our body politic insured a renewal of life, which,

"Broadening down from precedent to precedent",

promised, as it still promises, ever richer and more abundant fruit. There may and must be differences of opinion as to many of the questions that have agitated the Association during the last twenty-three years, and will continue to do so, unless the worst of all events—stagnation—were to ensue; but whatever the shortcomings may be that can fairly be laid to our charge, I question whether any profession has ever done more in so brief a space of time to regenerate itself, to show a more healthful activity, or to produce more beneficial and enduring results. Those results, whether we refer to the expansion, the increased and unselfish energy of our corporations, to the Act of 1858, with the consequent formation of the Medical Council, the publication of a national *Pharmacopœia*, and the recognition of State Medicine, to speak only of a few salient features, take their root essentially in our Association. Their very mention refutes the accusation which has been heard from time to time, that medical men showed some of the worst features of trades-unionism. The great leaders to whom we have given our willing adhesion have universally looked to the improved education of the profession, the diffusion of its benefits among our countrymen, the prevention of disease, and the physical and moral advancement of the nation, as their guiding principles. They have put a Christian interpretation upon the Hippocratic oath, and have not hesitated to make personal and corporate sacrifices where the good of the community appeared to demand them. There has even been a tendency to self-depreciation occasionally, which was not justified by the circumstances, as it was incompatible with that healthy frame of mind which should urge on to higher achievements. But those who have a personal experience of things as they were thirty years ago, can scarcely hesitate to

admit that, in all aspects in which our profession can be regarded in relation to our fellow-citizens, it occupies a better position now than then. Much has been said about our political status. I am not one of those who consider Parliamentary honours undesirable for members of the medical profession who possess a patrimony sufficient to enable them to disregard the emoluments of practice, or who have realised a competency by the ordinary routine; but, while circumstances are never likely to allow their number to be very large, I hold that, speaking broadly, the political arena, in its usual limited sense, is not the one for which our education or our sympathies generally most fit us. The medical man is so trained to look at and examine the questions that present themselves to him in all its aspects, that he can scarcely make a good party man. Besides, we are exempt from serving on juries, and from filling many of those useful and honourable civic posts which help to educate the rising politician. We give much unpaid or underpaid work of another kind, as our quota to the treasury of the commonwealth; and the time may come, nay, I would trust that it is not far distant, when some of the most distinguished, zealous, and far-sighted of our brethren may be called to a higher position in our Sovereign's councils than has yet been the case; not for the mere vulgar gratification of a personal ambition, but because there are many questions that come more and more into the foreground, upon which it is desirable that individuals, who have received that medical training which can alone qualify them to advise, should publicly exercise a power and a responsibility which shall develope, extend, and strengthen the health of the nation.

Those who are prejudiced against the view that medical men have a capacity for becoming "rulers of men", have only to look to our vast colonial possessions to learn that the training of the physician qualifies him for posts of the highest and most responsible character. Can we believe that, in crossing the Atlantic, the Pacific, or the Indian Oceans, a transmutation takes place of a baser to a nobler metal, and that a man who can worthily rise to the highest places in other hemispheres is incompetent to give wise counsel and to carry strong and beneficent measures while he is in contact with his native soil?

It is not without significance, as to the influence which the question of the Nation's health is exerting upon the public mind, when we find a Prime Minister putting hygiene and its bloodless victories on a level with the sanguinary achievements of generals and admirals. Mr. Disraeli,\* on the 9th of November, 1875, said: "I believe that a policy that diminishes the death-rate of a great nation is a feat as considerable as any of those decisive battles of the world that generally decide nothing." Whatever our politics, it appears that here we have the indications of a policy upon which "Whig and Tory all agree"; but it is the first time that the principle underlying it has been announced as guiding the action of a First Lord of the Treasury. We draw a good augury from it. Echoing his leader's sentiments, Mr. Cross, on the same occasion, dwelt upon the duties devolving upon the City authorities, "to rid the City of all those plague-spots which have spread disease and misery throughout the whole metropolis"; and he told them that their powers, "rightly employed, would be the means of conferring a great benefit on the community at large". Post-prandial effusions may not have all the dignity of official statements; still, assuming that the proverb *In vino veritas* applies to ministers not less than to ordinary mortals,

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\* See *Times'* report of the Lord Mayor's banquet at Guildhall.

we may indulge in the hope that, although the speakers might be unwilling to carry out their argument to its legitimate conclusions, they recognise the great principle for which we are contending.

In small and scattered communities, the want of sanitary supervision does not immediately make itself felt ; though, with our present knowledge, it is manifest that legislators grievously neglect their duty, if they do not, in the infancy of townships and states, take those steps which shall render it unnecessary, with their growth, to regret early *laches*. With our present and increasing population, with all the peculiar demands made upon every fibre of the individual, it is especially the duty of governments to see that labour and life be economised, which means that health be made a State question.

Whether it would be wise to seek the establishment of a distinct ministry of Health and Medicine ; whether we should try to secure for the best men among us seats on Her Majesty's Privy Council ; or under what other form the medical interests of the country could be best administered—it would be out of place to discuss here. The members of the Association have better opportunities of ventilating such details. But of this I feel assured, that the time will soon be at hand when, in some way or other, greater power must be put into the hands of physicians, in order to secure the most perfect development of hygienic measures for our country.\* I conceive that I should have neglected a duty which this occasion imposes upon me, had I failed to indicate one, if not the main, direction which our associate labours should continue to take. The coryphaei of medicine in all times have had vague presentiments on this subject ; but, from the celebrated work *On Airs, Waters, and Places*, which Hippocrates published about 400 years before Christ,† to the remarkable and interesting volume *On the Civilisation of England*, which appeared two thousand two hundred and fifty-seven years later,‡ mankind and their growth are represented rather as the creatures than the controllers of circumstance ; whereas I hold that it is our duty to rise superior to the physical world, so that we may compel it to obey us. If we are to subdue the earth and have dominion over it, we must first seek thoroughly to acquaint ourselves with those supreme laws under which the Creator has placed us ; but the very essence of all science, civilisation, and medical power, runs counter to those fatalistic views which the weakness of human nature has so often made paramount ; and which, out of harmony with all intellectual and spiritual progress, constitute man the torpid and abject slave, rather than the loving and obedient child, anxious to realise the high destiny to which he is called in this and other worlds.

The members of the Association have ever shown that they took large views of the duties of medicine in regard to man in his relations to nature. The very first volume of *Transactions*, published under the auspices of Dr. Hastings, contains no less than three valuable articles on medical topography : the first, on the furthest south-western ex-

\* Since these remarks were penned, Mr. Gladstone, in an address of great eloquence, delivered at the London Hospital Medical School, has dwelt on the same topic, and has drawn attention to the increasing importance of medicine and the medical profession. "That profession", he said, "presented a future of the highest interest. There was in that future the probability that it would gain increased influence, greater as compared with other professions." (See *Times*, Friday, July 14th, 1876.)

† Hippocrates is supposed to have been born in 460 before Christ. It is scarcely a poetical licence to assume that this work was composed when he was sixty years of age.

‡ Mr. Buckle's work appeared in 1857.

tremity of Britain, by Dr. Forbes; the second, on Bristol, by Drs. Carrick and Symonds; the third, by Dr. Kenrick, on Stourport. Willingly would I dwell upon these, and many other similar productions by their successors in the same field; no less than upon the numerous evidences I might lay before you of the influence exercised by the Association upon the development of medicine in the various directions to which I have alluded; this would be impossible within the limits assigned to me. I may, however, be permitted to avail myself of this opportunity of inquiring whether the members of our Association have continued to take that interest in medical topography, which appears especially to have attracted its earlier members. We may hope for valuable information on the subject in connection with the locality in which we have to-day met, and with the extraordinary development of certain branches of manufacture for which Sheffield is famous. I would suggest that medical topography, comprising as it does the geology, water-supply, temperature, and sanitary statistics of a district, is especially a subject worthy of our annual meetings. The researches that it involves demand much labour, probably more directly useful to the community than to the inquirer who undertakes it; and I venture to ask whether it might not well constitute a subject to which every year a portion of our available balance might be allotted for the remuneration of an acknowledged worker in this branch of science. We should thus gradually accumulate a valuable amount of information, which would serve as a beacon and a guide to future inquirers. Could not the Council of the Association be empowered to select one or more members residing in the town where each successive annual meeting is to be held, to devote themselves specially to this work, and to present their report at the meeting? It appears to me that the duties we owe to one another and the State would here find a fitting expression, while at the same time we should be attending to the call of medical science, our relations to which embrace the second topic, to which in my opening remarks I invited your attention.

Allow me to advert again to a fact which not unsuitably connects these two branches of my inquiry. It is, that medical topography first enlisted the interest and established the reputation of a name whose bearer afterwards did more for the advancement of scientific medicine in this country, and towards securing its recognition at home and abroad, than any other of the great men who have belonged to our ranks. I allude to one, now no more—unselfish, honest, brave, a Bayard of medicine, “*sans peur et sans reproche*”—the author of the first article on medical topography in the first volume of the *Transactions* of the Association, Dr. (afterwards Sir John) Forbes. Would that he were still amongst us, to see that his labours and his sacrifices were not wasted! Having won his spurs in the literary field which the Association opened for him, Forbes commenced his career as a provincial physician; he terminated it as a regenerator of medical science, and may almost be said to have succumbed after a great and abiding victory, as a martyr to the truth which he loved above all things.

The second event of modern times, on which I beg your leave to dwell for a brief space, as specially connected, in my estimate, with the advancement of scientific medicine in England, is closely associated with the name of Sir John Forbes; from 1836, when he resided at Chichester, to 1846, when he had long been a denizen of Old Burlington Street, editor of the *British and Foreign Medical Review*, of which it would be difficult to speak too highly, whether we consider its literary merits, its

thorough honesty and impartiality, or its grand and cosmopolitan scientific breadth.

The October number of 1846 concluded the editorial labours of Forbes ; and in the parting summary which he presents to the reader, of his work in connection with the journal, the editor, among other reasons, mentions the diminished sale, which he attributes in part to an article which he had published, and of which he acknowledged himself the author, in the January number of the same year. It is this article to which I venture to assign the maternity of a new era of the medical profession in its scientific position in Her Majesty's dominions. It was entitled "Homoeopathy, Allopathy, and Young Physic".

This article was essentially a protest against the polypharmacy of the day ; and a summons to the practitioner seriously to consider and studiously to examine the resources and the methods of treatment at his command. It was, without intending to be so, an amplification of the Hippocratic views so ably propounded by our departed friend, Dr. Warburton Begbie, at our last annual assembly, as to the physician's duties in the face of his great enemy—Disease. Though most of the arguments used by Forbes were as old as the hills, his boldness in bringing them forward at the particular time which he selected, startled the profession like a thunderclap, and the author was subjected to much animadversion and misrepresentation.

Thirty years have gone by, and I may assume that few among my present audience are familiar with the article in question ; or if they are, that they would hesitate to subscribe to most of the doctrines with which Forbes shook the withering tree of routine. Thirty years ago great agitation prevailed in the profession, owing to the warmth with which many members of the upper classes of the community received and supported Hahnemannian tenets and practice ; the hostility which the article aroused, was due to its being represented by its cavillers as favouring those views. I am not one of those who can subscribe to the ancient doctrine, that in all diseases we find a *vis conservatrix* or *medicatrix*, inherent in the system of the patient, which has simply to be allowed her own way, to lead the patient to a happy release from his malady. There is, according to my observation, no less a *vis destructrix*,\* which has to be met boldly and decisively. But modern English medicine paid too exclusive attention to the latter, while it ignored the former ; it placed its trust in the *armamentarium pharmaceuticum* to an extent which we, of the present day, neither follow nor applaud. The trade spirit also had some part in these aberrations ; hence it was but natural, as the laity discovered that they might put aside the customary six bottles a day, in addition to the pill at night and the draught in the morning, sent in (and charged for) by the family attendant, without necessarily becoming a unit in the Registrar's death list, that they often attributed a cure, which we know the *vis medicatrix* is capable of effecting in many cases, when aided by a suitable regimen, to an infinitesimal dose of *sepia*, *pulsatilla*, or *nux*.

In an ancient work on medicine, published in 1559, the author, Mr. Bullein,† introduces two friends, discussing the merits of their physicians ; one says, that being very ill, he had called in three physicians at once, to the astonishment of the other, who fears that his

\* "Destructrix" is not a Latin word ; "conservator" and "conservatrix" are Ciceronian ; "destructrix" occurs in Tertullian ; but although I have no authority for the use of the word "destructrix", I trust it may, from the context, and in accordance with etymological precedent, be considered justifiable.

† *New Boke of Physic*, by W. Bullein ; 1559. Black letter.

purse would scarcely suffice for the discharge of the customary fee. The reply is, that Doctor Dict, Doctor Quiet, and Dr. Merryman had effected a cure, which had cost the patient nothing in the coin of the realm. These three doctors have never been overlooked with impunity, as some of the most valuable contributions to the literature of the present generation testify. It is, however, not to be denied that, when Forbes's article roused the indignation of his opponents, the elements in treatment which they allegorically represent, had given place almost entirely to what was termed heroic methods. Bleeding from the jugular vein and temporal artery, large and repeated doses of mercurial and antimonial preparations, constant venesection and leeching, were in daily use; and it was not to be wondered at, that as physiology and pathology came to be more thoroughly studied, the difficulty of finding a satisfactory reply to an inquiry, why these things were done, should arrest the thoughtful practitioner. Homœopathy gave him a rude shake, and he found it necessary to unlearn much and to retrace his steps, so as to recover the true path of nature. But it was only on the principle, *fas est et ab hoste doceri*. Forbes made himself the spokesman of many, who, by the support they rendered him, showed that while they recognised this error, they were as far as he was from regarding homœopathy as a development of science. Listen to what he says. After analysing other evidence in favour of homœopathy, he very carefully reviews *An Inquiry into the Homœopathic Practice of Medicine*, by Dr. Henderson, a professor of medicine in the University of Edinburgh, who had become a convert to Hahnemannian doctrine; Forbes remarks upon the cases he reports, and the deductions he adopts: "Men capable of admitting cases of this kind as evidence, and we could extract fifty from Dr. Henderson's book much feebler than this, are demonstrably disqualified to treat of things which demand for their handling the stern logic of a masculine mind." Forbes sums up the results of his entire inquiry into the value of homœopathy in the following words: "If, for the sake of argument, we were to admit that homœopathy were partially true, and therefore that it might fairly be received as one of the recognised methods of treating disease, it would appear to us, according to our present light, to be very unfortunate if this were done. The guiding principles of homœopathy appear to us to be of that character, which must render its exercise very injurious to medicine, as a branch of science. Based as it is on mere extrinsic secondary phenomena or symptoms, and exclusively engaged in the search for and adaptation of specific remedies to such phenomena, we cannot but regard it as calculated to destroy all scientific progress in medicine, and to degrade the minds of those who practise it. Its direct tendency seems to be that of severing medicine from the sciences and establishing it as a mere art, and thus converting physicians from philosophers to artisans. Of course if, by such a conversion, diseases were to be better treated, and more speedily and frequently cured, it would not only be absurd, but transcendently wicked so to sacrifice the welfare of humanity for the sake of a scientific phantom; but as we have said, it is anything but proved that such a result would follow the change, and therefore, until the proof is obtained, it behoves all who regard the prosperity and dignity of true art, to resist its progress."

The writer further examines the causes of the success which homœopathy enjoyed in his day, and gives numerous interesting and striking illustrations, which lead him to the conclusion, "that the curative powers of Nature suffice to explain all the triumphs of homœopathy".

He then adduces some of the influences which we, at the present day, certainly do not regard as in any way the special property of the system, and to which Forbes thought they might be fairly ascribed ; they are essentially those which Mr. Bullein more than three hundred years ago summarised in the short allegory above recounted.

I have not the slightest desire to revive the controversy on homœopathy ; but the preceding remarks and quotations seemed necessary to bring before you an important phase in modern medicine, and from the slight indications that the time and the place permit me to give, to ask you to realise the strides that the last three decennia have effected in the diffusion of scientific views among the great body of British practitioners. We are approaching so near our own time in the consideration of these matters, that it would be invidious to go into further detail. Many of the great workers in the various fields of observation who achieved the present results, are still among us ; and, if I mention one or two subjects of inquiry which pertinently indicate the progress that has been made, it is rather by way of illustration and example, than because it is possible to exhaust a subject which might fruitfully occupy entire volumes.

Consider the vague manner in which formerly the influence of air and water was treated ; the cosmic, telluric, and atmospheric agencies that were accused of affecting man, without any precision greater than that belonging to dreamland ; consider, on the other hand, the rigid investigations that have engaged scientific physicians from the days of Snow (whom Dr. Wilson designated in his Harveian oration before the College of Physicians, as "*Nix per aethera notus*" , but whose claim to the gratitude of posterity rests much more on his inquiries into the origin of cholera in contaminated water than upon his connection with anaesthetics) ; consider the investigations into the causation of disease by impure water, and the brilliant results that have been achieved as regards the influence of that first necessary of life in the origin and propagation of morbid processes ; ponder upon the equally important, though as yet, perhaps, not equally decisive investigations, that have been made in regard to the aerial germs of disease, the invaluable aid afforded to precise knowledge of morbid processes by microscope and thermometer (instruments unknown to the student of my day) ; the searching examinations into the operation of medicinal agents ; the revelations of the various sources of disease from food contamination and adulteration ; and say whether medicine in its totality does not fully deserve the title of a science, and has not already reaped rewards scarcely recognised by the younger generation of medical men, and certainly not appreciated as they deserve by our non-medical contemporaries ; rewards such as Forbes and his coadjutors looked for when they challenged their contemporaries to a more reasonable inquiry into the nature and history of disease, and the real value of the various agents at our command for its removal.

And, for practical results to the community at large, look at the increased duration of life wherever the medical man has been listened to ; to the enormously increased value of life in the army (in connection with which question allow me to advert to the loss the nation has but just sustained in the death of that great man, our Associate, Edmund Parkes) ; to the general reduction of the death-rate ; the check put upon the iuroads of disease in many noxious trades and occupations ; the reduction, nay, almost arrest of mortality in some diseases that under "heroic" treatment more frequently succumbed than recovered, diseases of the head, of the chest, of the abdominal viscera. May we not

quote the remarkable revelations with regard to trichiniasis and other parasites as permanent victories? Is it too early yet to speak of what some of us may regard as a victory over the bane of England's youth and early manhood, rheumatic fever, by salicylic acid? Look at the advances of surgery in regard to its conservative labours, its anaesthetics, its antiseptic treatment! Who that scans the changes in medical training and conduct during the last thirty years, can deny that mankind is the better for the more scientific development of medicine, and that the more we encourage true scientific work, the grander will be the beneficial results that we and our descendants may reckon upon?

But while we rejoice over our reminiscences, we must not forget that every step in advance opens out to us a new vista of further and higher responsibilities. Many of the inquiries that have been initiated have not yet been terminated; many results attained by the man of science have not yet found their practical application in daily life. An association can do little directly to promote science. Scientific work is rarely well done by large assemblies. The student works in the quiet laboratory, in the secluded library, or at the bedside of his patient; and though he may be encouraged by the sympathy and approval of his contemporaries, science and its results are and ever will be his chief rewards. But it is our duty as an Association to assist in rendering his results, if not beneficial to the inquirer, at least to his fellow men, and preventing impediments from being put in his way, that thwart his undertaking, damp his zeal, and enfeeble his powers by the chilling effect of neglect and discouragement. In this direction our Association has already done much. We cannot create the *sollers ingenium*, but we may smooth the difficulties in its path, and assist in securing its recognition by those less competent to judge, and yet willing to benefit by its activity.

It appears to me especially the function of an Association like ours to spread the knowledge of scientific results, and to secure their application to society. No true work is barren, but it often remains hidden, because its seed falls on uncongenial soil; and it is our part to see that the particular work of the philosophic physician is duly appreciated by those who rule our commonwealth, partly because we are bound to show our gratitude to the benefactors of our race, and partly because the general public are by no means educated in such a direction as to enable them to appreciate the advantages conferred by medical science. Hence, again, I say that the British Medical Association, if it wishes to deserve well of mankind, is bound to exert itself to secure a more public recognition by the State of the aims of the profession, and to obtain for those calculated to represent them properly a more fitting method of realising them than is at present possible. The recognition of State Medicine to a claim for university honours is already a step in the right direction, and shows that some of the educated classes are beginning to appreciate the importance of the questions at issue; but how much yet remains to be done is shown by the apathy, of which we forbear to adduce special instances, cynical so frequently by municipal and other legislative bodies, in regard to measures of vital importance to their own welfare and that of those around them. Here I hold that our Association has a great sphere of action before it; and what we are able to do in this direction must, if my views are just, be mainly realised by the influence we are able to exert on education in schools and universities.

These observations bring me to the consideration of the *third element* in the modern development of our profession, or our relations to education, to which I crave your indulgent attention yet a little while.

Nearly a quarter of a century ago, the poor Welsh apothecary, as he was wont facetiously to denominate himself, and to whom all honour is due, conceived the idea of founding an institution which should, besides providing a home for the invalided and impoverished members of the profession, supply a liberal education, at the lowest possible cost compatible with its scope, for the sons of medical men, many of whom were, as foundation-scholars, to receive their training free of all cost. The proposition was warmly received and well supported, so that we may now, in 1876, speak of large and beneficial results. The feeling that animated the supporters of Mr. Propert was doubtless, in the first instance, one of Christian benevolence; but it was also largely based on the desire, now becoming more and more urgent, to give expression to the sense of unity and co-operation pervading the entire profession of medicine. Of course there were some who found fault, and who would have preferred that less money should have been spent upon bricks and mortar; but I much doubt whether any scheme would have commanded similar success that had not been accompanied by the conspicuous and tangible product of such a group of buildings as now adorns the heights to the south of Epsom. The eleemosynary character of the institution has been extended, and its typical feature as a centre of professional harmony has insensibly acquired a firmer hold upon the medical public; but it is now gradually achieving for itself a position in the educational institutions of the country which I apprehend will effect a more wide-spread influence than even its sanguine founder anticipated. And it is right that it should do so.

If we look around at the system of education still prevailing in our country to a large extent, can we admit that it accords with the spirit of the times? and do we not rather find that even now the rules that regulated the Trivium and Quadrivium of the Middle Ages hold good to an extent that would seem incredible in a day of railways, electric telegraphs, and penny postage, were the fact not too patent? The bed of Procrustes is still too much the type of modern education. The mind of our youth, whatever its tendencies or aspirations, is still uniformly sought to be moulded upon one monastic system. The glories of Homer, Demosthenes, Horace, or Tacitus, are still forced upon minds incapable of appreciating them, or are made a preparation for a life in which Nature and Nature's laws, a knowledge of mankind in his various relations to internal and outward circumstances, is the first desideratum. No one is more convinced than I am of the value of a knowledge of the literary and social work of the great nations of antiquity; but the question that I would submit to your careful consideration is not how great their value, but how much the manner in which these subjects are taught, and the time that is bestowed upon them when the youthful energies should be trained for the work of life, has interposed with our progress as a nation. Under our prevailing system, the highest power that we are endowed with—that of observation and comparison—is forcibly kept down; and even the first requisite of a liberal education, the knowledge of our own language and its marvellous achievements, the power of using and enjoying it to the utmost, is deadened instead of being quickened. At the Epsom College, as is right in an institution which is ruled by medical men, it is sought, so far as it is compatible with the requirements of other

scholastic bodies, to set an example in giving prominence to the teaching of natural science; and the results, small perhaps as yet, are already giving promise of a greater future, and cannot fail to make a wider impress upon our national system of education.

But is it right that we should wait for the slow progress which one small institution may make in public estimation, without taking further steps to secure what, in and out of our profession, is almost universally admitted to be a desirable, a necessary object? Can we not do something to secure better education at large, and a more general adoption of principles which we believe to be irrefragable? It would be useless to put such a question if I saw no remedy; but I believe the remedy is at hand, and that it largely depends upon the medical profession, though it is not their immediate function to occupy themselves with educational matters, to cause a gradual and peaceful revolution in the prevailing system.

To do so, however, we must go, not so much to the primary schools, as to those fountain-heads of English education, which put the stamp and die upon what they regard as success, and thus compel all dependent upon their fiat to work as they list. It would be quite impossible now to discuss the history and growth of our universities; but we, as Englishmen, can scarcely admit that they do now, or ever have, taken that position as teachers of the great body of the nation which we see aspired to or occupied by continental universities. An university should be, as its name denotes, an *universitas literarum*, and not limit its teaching to one or two disciplines, which though valuable in themselves, are simply means, not always appropriate, to an end to be attained elsewhere. To my apprehension, an university does not deserve the name, which does not within itself teach the principles and theory of all science, and which adopts a *régime* and habits that exclude from its precincts all whose mental calibre cannot adapt itself to one formula of a classical or mathematical shibboleth, or whose means compel them to enter a professional calling without unnecessary delay. I maintain that *all* members of learned professions ought to enjoy an university training, and that a country whose universities do not allow of their students acquiring the entire theoretic part of their respective professions within their walls, neglect the first duty for which they were called into existence. I will not now speak of any other profession than our own; but, as regards medicine, I conceive that many of the educational difficulties that have been so long under discussion, and that are far from being removed, will disappear when such arrangements are made at our universities that the great body of practitioners can avail themselves of their advantages. In order that this may be possible, it is necessary that a standard of preliminary training be fixed which shall qualify for admission into the university, and that, at the age of eighteen or nineteen, when young men generally put on the cap and gown, they should be permitted to pass at once from the subjects they have been learning at school to those professional studies which the universities ought to be able to teach infinitely better than the small, self-supporting academies of medicine now scattered over the country.

It is no small credit to the energy of the medical schools as they exist, that they have done as much as they have done; but, with the increase of knowledge and the demand made upon the lecturers, it is simply impossible that the latter should keep pace with the times, unless they are exempted from the *res angusta domi*, and are enabled to devote themselves entirely to science. At present, the majority of lectureships are treated simply as stepping-stones to medical practice,

and hospital physicians and surgeons pass from one subject to another, not so much by virtue of special qualification, as by the all-powerful influence of professional seniority. Something may doubtless be said in favour of our present system of competition; but I would ask whether the balance of argument is not in favour of professorships at our ancient universities, where the increased numbers of alumni would render a professorship not only a place of high and laudable ambition, but would make its emoluments worthy of acceptance by those of our body who desire to devote themselves to, and merge themselves entirely in, scientific research. Botany, chemistry, natural philosophy, physiology, anatomy, comparative anatomy, pharmacy, and *materia medica*, the theory of medicine and surgery—might all be better and more profitably taught at an university than in provincial or metropolitan schools of medicine. The numbers that would flock to our universities if they held out such advantages, would render necessary the endowment of more than one professorship for each discipline, and thus a salutary rivalry, without which stagnation would ensue, would be preserved. And if our present university arrangements are insufficient to provide for the two thousand medical students who annually inscribe their names on the registers of our schools, what is there to prevent the establishment of more universities in towns willing to advance the growth of the sciences, and possessed of fewer of those sanitary defects which mar the beauties of Oxford and Cambridge?

It is utterly against my views that an university should belong to a class; and therefore, while I maintain that we physicians and surgeons of England may legitimately labour for the foundation of a new university, which shall embody certain methods and principles, if the older institutions cannot receive us, I should regard the attempt as futile, unless provision were made at once to establish professorships required by all the faculties, so as to insure an influx of ingenuous youth, destined for all the various walks of life. Has Germany suffered either by the poverty or the number of its universities? Has that great country not ever been to us a model, both in the manner of teaching and in the achievements of the taught?

I value political independence, honour, and integrity even higher than scientific growth; but, as the former are secured to us, as far as institutions can make them sure, is it not time that we throw some of our superfluous energies into the cultivation and development of the scientific growth of the nation, and emulate our cousins on the other side of the German Ocean in the number and power of our universities, as they are essaying to walk in that path of constitutional freedom which has so long been the Briton's birthright? It is not found in Germany that the transition of a student from one university to another either interrupts his studies or checks his professional career. There is a sufficient understanding among these bodies to allow the thread that was broken at one to be taken up at another, the attendance at one admitting to its equivalent position at the other. The benefits that I would thus confer on medical students would react most beneficially upon the community. Students of medicine would enjoy the advantage of the highest teaching intellect that could be commanded, and they would benefit by that free interchange of thought and opinion which is the characteristic feature of the intercourse at an university between young men treading the different paths of life; they would feel themselves to be, more than they now are, an integral part of the republic of letters, of which an university ought to be the type. But I question whether the gain to the nation would not be even greater than

that conferred upon the medical student; for, indirectly, the members of the legal and clerical professions, and that large number of the gentry who visit the universities rather for the purposes of general education than with the view to following a profession in after-life, would of necessity interchange opinions with their medical colleagues, and imperceptibly become imbued with a respect for, and a knowledge of, nature and nature's laws, which could not but favourably react upon their execution of future duties.

The gulf that even now in England separates the inquirer into God's laws in Nature from his "educated" fellow citizen, could not be more distinctly shown than has been done by the recent discussions on vivisection, in which the non-medical community have thought it right and honest to hurl at us all the opprobria of language from an entire misapprehension of the means, the scope, and object of our researches. Our legislators would rival the enemies of Galileo; if their views had been in the ascendant when Harvey's discoveries were made, we might still be running after the will-o'-the-wisp of an Archæus; and, if our detractors had their way, the progress of science and humanity might even now receive a check that would retard the advancement of civilisation. What but a free interchange of thought and opinion between the most educated of the rising generation can prevent the recurrence of a similar bathos?

One of the great obstacles to the diffusion of sanitary knowledge, and of a due appreciation of the unselfish labours of physicians, consists in the ignorance which still prevails so largely, even among the higher classes, as to their object and scope. The free intercourse of young men of different professions would do much to remove existing prejudices, and to widen the actual amount of knowledge; so that their co-operation in after life would be more certain and effective, from the community of feeling and interest created in them by early association.

The practical question remains, whether our present social constitution admits of the realisation of a plan like that suggested. Does it not resolve itself mainly into one of pecuniary means? The greater demands now made by our examining boards appear to answer this in one direction; while the success attending the establishment of a College, like Keble College, seems to answer it in another. The present extravagant cost of residence at Oxford and Cambridge, which elicits the groans of many a *paterfamilias*, is shown not to be a necessity; if it were unavoidable, it would be an argument against the admission of the bulk of medical students to the universities which would silence me. There are many who value their university residence rather because it is a proof of their parents having been wealthy, than because they have any superior acquirements to boast of; but I do not think so meanly of the ruling powers as to believe that they would desire to make property the qualification of primary consideration in the test of admission. The heartiness with which the universities have, during the last twenty years, thrown themselves into the great question of educational reform, and given material aid to its intrinsic development, is the best proof that they recognise their high mission. At the same time, it may be doubted whether their energies in directing middle-class examination are not somewhat misplaced. We all know one or more benevolent ladies, whose labours for the clothing-clubs, soup-kitchens, visiting and missionary societies of their parish, are unlimited, but whose children are allowed to run wild from want of that home-supervision which their mother's expansive benevolence prevents her from exercising.

Does not *Alma Mater* also tend, with due reverence be it said, to a

partial neglect of those duties which lie nearer home, in order that she may acquire the name of an universal foster-mother? At all events, if she has spare energies for the chickens that are wandering about intended and uncared for, she ought surely first to show that her own brood has received the necessary food and protection, and that she has guarded them from becoming the prey of the designing and watchful fox.

Whether our Association can take active steps towards the consummation of what I would fain hope many of my hearers may consider to be a desirable object, is a question that I dare not now dwell upon at large; but I entreat your permission to add a few more words on the subject. I apprehend we have in the first instance to consider, not so much whether it is possible for Oxford or Cambridge to receive our students, as to determine whether it is right and proper that the future generation of medical men shall receive their scientific training at an university or not. If the affirmative be adopted, we may then make our wishes respectfully known to the authorities of the old universities. If they read the signs of the times with our interpretation, we should do well to benefit by the *prestige* of their ancient names, and it would be a matter of rejoicing that those seats of learning would secure the advantages which it is believed would accrue to them. The alternative of a new foundation in a southern or northern county town would still remain. For my own part, I venture to think that, if you endorse the views I have offered to you, we should more speedily gain our ends if this great Association resolved that a new university, in which the professorial element shall be paramount, is necessary; and proceeded to take such steps as prudent foresight may suggest to secure the realisation of so great an end.

If I have succeeded in obtaining your sympathies, I have little doubt that the ways and means will be forthcoming to enable us to meet what I regard as the summons of the spirit of progress and science, addressed to ourselves and our contemporaries. If you differ from me, I crave your pardon for having taken up your time unnecessarily; but I should scarcely have been true to myself if I had not seized an opportunity, such as the indulgent offer of your Council has given me to-day, of placing before you a summary of the great work that our Association has done, and the still higher objects that I believe it to be destined to achieve. *Salvari animam meam.*

When I was first invited to deliver this address, I was told that I should meet you at one of the most frequented health-resorts of England, and I naturally asked myself whether I might not appropriately select some topic of general medical interest connected with hygiene, climatology, or balneology, to enlarge upon; but, on review of the past history of our Association and of its influence on our common profession, I could not resist the temptation to take a larger scope, and to ask you whether we are to rest satisfied with what our predecessors have done for us, or whether we should not rather emulate their great endeavours, and seek to place medicine on a higher social, political, and scientific platform. Sloth and stagnation are not to be thought of here, in the very centre of England's manufacturing greatness. Everything that surrounds us challenges us with the watch-word, "*Excelsior!*" Modern life is a continuous and hard-fought battle of the intellect. Muscular Christianity is necessary to sustain and invigorate the body; but the training requisite to sustain the mind at its highest point of development is surely now more than ever a question of national importance. The workers in brass and iron, no less than

the practitioners of medicine, are indebted to science for their greatest achievements.

What say you? Is it possible for the British Medical Association to do more than has yet been done to place science on a footing worthy of an empire upon which the sun never sets? Can this very meeting take steps to inaugurate a new university in which none shall enter but those who, being well prepared for its curriculum, shall be capable of receiving a training by the highest intellects of the country for ever higher work in all that adorns and elevates life?

I cannot hope to carry all your suffrages with me; but, however our views may differ on some of the topics I have touched upon, I am satisfied that we all agree in our reverence for the great names of the past, and in our desire to tread in the footsteps of those who have led us to the position we now occupy.

That we may more and more be enabled to work with and for the growth, physical and intellectual, of our fellowmen, that we and our children's children may become more and more identified with our country's greatness, has been the wish that has prompted the thoughts which thus imperfectly and fragmentarily I have ventured to lay before you, the Members of the British Medical Association.

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